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ABSTRACT

In the 1968-69 controversy over the foreign language requirement for the B.A. degree in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts of the University of Michigan, the College faculty chose a compromise solution to the policy in practice since 1954 of a required 4-semester study of a foreign language with placement testing. Policy alternatives and modifications resulting from at least eight different proposals included--(1) automatic exemption from the 2-year requirement for entering students who had completed four years of language in high school, (2) an alternate "reading track" for students not wanting other language skills, (3) a student option to a pass-fail grading system, and (4) liberalization of administrative policy. (KM)

From: The Foreign Language Courier; Numbers 42, June 1969

A SURVEY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STAFF

TOWARD THE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

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The foreign language graduation requirement in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts of the University of Michigan was an object of considerable criticism and debate throughout the academic year 1968-69. In this article I have attempted to describe the nature of the controversy, summarize the particular events which led to the modification of the requirement, and report the results of a survey conducted among the staff members of the foreign language departments of the College. In order to give a complete picture of the modified requirement, the old requirement which went into effect in 1954, statements made by four language department chairmen, a proposal for an entrance requirement, and the essence of the new requirement will be included.

I: SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS

Immediately after the beginning of the fall semester, 1968, the so-called two-year foreign language requirement for the B.A. degree in the Literary College of the University became the object of severe criticisms by students. Particularly active in the assault of the requirement were the Student Government Council, the Radical Caucus, a splinter group of the S. D. S., and the Michigan Daily, the student newspaper of the University. The movement to abolish the requirement gained much impetus and publicity on the campus due to sit-ins, threats of class disruption, petitions, referendum, public debate, etc., all of which received full treatment in the Michigan Daily.

Much of the discontent voiced by these students seemed to center around issues arising from the nature of the language requirement and the desire to exercise influence on the curricular decisions of the College. The main points raised by the active students were:

1. Students should have the right to control not only their private life but also their academic program.
2. Language requirement is "irrelevant" to their educational goals.
3. It is too late to learn languages in college.
4. Languages are poorly taught at the University.
5. Students should not undergo four semesters of a language under threats of failures.

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Many of those who were intimately connected with the foreign language instruction at the University immediately recognized the fallacies involved in some of these issues. The first point raised concerns not only the foreign languages but also other distribution requirements. Language study seems to have been chosen as a target particularly because of the amount of time and energy required by it. The adherents of the view--notably the members of the Radical Caucus and the Student Government Council--insisted that a sound educational process could not be based on any kind of coercion. They argued that students have the right not only to determine their own study program but also to refuse to be forced into the study of any subject which they do not like or which is "irrelevant". Such an idea, if carried out indiscriminately, would have far-reaching repercussions on the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the higher education in America. Foreign language study is still required in many colleges and universities for the B.A. degree as an essential part of "liberal education". Perhaps it is time that the traditional notion of liberal education should be re-evaluated and redefined. In the Literary College of the University, the Faculty is presently entrusted with the right and the responsibility to establish the curriculum for students. There is little doubt that the role of students in curricular matters must be examined and the opinions of those who are mature, responsible, and well informed should be sought and heeded.

The faculty members who spoke in favor of a language requirement--and many were from disciplines other than foreign languages--repeatedly pointed out the virtues and necessities of language study. Their main arguments may be summarized as follows: The monolingualism prevalent among many Americans confines them to be the one language they know and the culture and way of life represented by it. In a world which continues to present many political, economic, and military crisis, the ability of people to understand and get along with other people of the world is not a matter of choice but necessity. One of the duties of an educated person is to appreciate at least one civilization other than his own and its contributions to mankind. The best instrument for the study of a people and their culture is language itself. It opens avenues of absorbing study of various aspects of culture and civilization, enables the person to gain an insight into his own language and culture, and develops in him an ability to transcend his monolingual barrier and communicate actively or passively in a language other than his own. Furthermore, the relevance of any study must not be judged in terms of any immediate, revenue-producing knowledge and skills alone but in view of long-range personal development and enrichment as well.

The statement that it is too late to learn a language in college is at

least a partly valid one. It can be proven statistically that a longer exposure at an earlier age results in better learning of language skills. The role of high school language programs should be expanded in such a way that students already possess sufficient language proficiency when they enter college. To abolish language study in college because it is too late and to condemn high school language programs as being deficient result in the absurd implication that languages cannot be learned at all. According to a recent survey of the Bureau of School Services of the University, nearly 70% of Michigan high schools offer a third-year course in French, Spanish, or Latin. The enrollment in most of the first-year language courses at the University has decreased appreciably in the past several years and the size of the second and third-year courses has increased, reflecting the growing number of entering students with better language training in high school.

The statement that foreign language courses are poorly taught at the University has no demonstrable proof whatsoever and voiced only by those who know nothing of the development in language teaching. While our basic instructional methods are audio-lingually oriented, we do not subscribe to strictly oral-aural approach. Grammer is usually explicitly taught, and reading and writing are presented already in the first semester [1] At least on a nationally standardized test, the fourth-semester courses in modern European languages has demonstrated nigher achievement than in many peer institutions. An objective evaluation of the foreign language program could be accomplished only by a team of experts in the field from other institutions. We can only say that changes and improvements are constantly introduced in our language curriculum and that all those who are entrusted with the administration of elementary language courses and supervision of Teaching Fellows are fully aware of developments in linguistics, psycholinguistics, methodology, and instructional materials.

Student discontent is centered not as much around language teaching methods as such but rather, around the manner in which the courses are administered and the very nature of language study. A survey conducted in the Department of Romance Languages in December indicated that most students were indifferent to the idea of retaining or abolishing the language requirement but that many objected to two things: If they must take a language, why shouldn't the course median be a B, and why is there so much to study every day? To the first question, the answer is that student performance has been increasing a little in the past several years [2] and that the grade point average in languages as a whole is no higher or lower than the majority of the lower-level courses offered in the College.

The most frequently voiced objection concerns the very nature of language study, which is essentially a cumulative learning process, requiring not only sufficient motivation and interest as in all other subjects but also the ability in rote memory, "information-retrieval", sound-symbol association, perception and manipulation of structural patterns, etc. Unlike many courses in the humanities, foreign languages demand not sporadic study but nearly constant preparation and review. It is virtually impossible to "cram in" overnight grammatical rules and lexical items and pass a test successfully. The idea of making language courses "easier" by issuing only high grades and reducing the amount of work--which has been cut down considerably since the adoption of the trimester system--constitutes an educational absurdity.

It is an erroneous assumption made by nearly all opponents of language requirement that students must suffer through four semesters of language study and that many barely come out of it with an average of D. As has been pointed out, the grade point average of language courses as verified by the College Administrative Board is neither too high nor too low in comparison with the others. Furthermore, according to the Admissions Committee, fewer than 5% of freshman in the fall of 1968 entered the College with less than two years of language study in high school. It is estimated also that less than 20% of the students go through four semesters of a language. [3]

Beginning January, 1969, at least eight different proposals regarding the foreign language requirement were submitted to the Faculty. They ranged from an outright abolition of the requirement to lengthening it to five semesters. One called for an entrance requirement equivalent to a third-semester course (which would demand a minimum of three years of high school language). Another stipulated a "contact" requirement of one year at the college level. Still another proposed the substitution of language courses by other subjects designed to inculcate "cosmopolitan views". Another proposed a three-semester requirement and granting of college credit for high school language study. Many of the "resolutions" proposed at lengthy faculty meetings were based on misinformation and a lack of understanding concerning the nature of foreign language study. The problem became more acute and complicated by the mounting pressure from student activists and those sympathetic to their cause and also due to a proposal to establish a "degree of general studies" which would entail no language or any other distribution requirements whatsoever.

The resolution which won the faculty approval was the one presented in the majority report of the College Curriculum Committee (see Appendix).

Its major features include the option of a pass-fail grading system, liberalized policy of the Administrative Board, exemption of students with four years of high school language study from the requirement, and the establishment of a "reading track". This resolution, essentially a compromise, will undoubtedly ease the pressure on the "captive audience" but does not completely solve some of the basic problems. Details need to be "interpreted" and worked out. Already the Administrative Board is willing to let a student continue his language study with grades of failure unless he is advised to repeat the course by his instructor. Our study of the placement test results indicates that only a third of those with four years of high school French should be exempted from the requirement. Thus the new policy adopted by the College results in a double standard, one applied to those who studied a language for four years in high school, and the other for those with less number of years or those who elect to begin a new language at the University. Let us hope that this policy will lead to the strengthening of high school language programs rather than in the creation of courses only on paper. In this writer's experience, advanced language courses are offered in many high schools only when enough students happen to sign up for them. They are often taught without any general or specific course objectives or a description of the methods of implementation and evaluation of the goals and achievement. There is little doubt that more work must be done in curriculum planning, training of teachers for advanced courses and articulation of language programs at all levels.

II. SURVEY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STAFF ATTITUDES

In view of the problems facing the foreign language requirement, the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction of the College conducted a survey of the language staff members in December, 1968. The primary objectives of the study were to poll opinions on four major areas of the controversy, the pass-fail grading system, an entrance requirement, modifications of the existing language requirement, and the possibilities of a multiple-track language program. The questionnaire was devised hastily during the last week of classes and, as a result, contained some questions which were found either to be too ambiguously worded or to require arbitrary yes-no answers. Approximately 49% of some 293 staff members in all six departments of foreign languages responded to the questionnaire. The small number of responses from the Classics Department is due to the fact that the chairman preferred to hold a special meeting of his staff members in order to consider the questionnaire and report the result in a letter. Segments of the letter pertinent to some of the questions will be quoted in this report. The following is an analysis of the data

obtained through this survey. Under each heading, commentary will precede the actual questions asked (enclosed in quotation marks) and the tabulation of the answers.

A. Background of the Staff

Approximately 85% of the replies came from Romance Languages, German, and Russian Departments. Of the total number of replies, 68.2% indicated the instructors' familiarity with the nature of elementary language courses since they had taught at least one lower-level course in the past two years. Some 27% of those who responded had had some kind of administrative or supervisory responsibility in such courses. An overwhelming majority (92.6%) of the replies showed the members' acquaintance with the recent development in methodology, linguistics, psycholinguistics, etc. The picture which emerges from the first section of the questionnaire is that the survey reflects the opinions of those in modern European languages who have taught an elementary course recently and who are familiar with disciplines specifically related to foreign language teaching.

a) "Your department"

83 Romance Langs. 13 Slavic Langs., 8 Far Eastern Langs.
26 Germanic Langs. 11 Near East. Langs. 2 Classical Studies

b) "Your position"

89 junior staff member (Teaching Fellow)
54 senior staff member (Lecture--Professor)

c) "Last time you taught a lower-level (100's & 200's) course:

98 teaching a course or courses now
14 one year ago
9 two years ago
3 three years ago
8 four years ago
9 five or more years ago
2 (No Answer)

d) "Are you familiar with the recent development in methodology, linguistics, psychology, etc., specifically related to foreign language teaching?"

72 quite familiar
59 somewhat familiar

12 very little

e) "Have you had an administrative or supervisory responsibility in any of the lower-level courses?"

39 yes
104 no

B. Pass-Fail Grading System

Questions concerning pass-fail grading sought to determine whether such a system would be feasible as an option to students. In our current practice, a grade of D is technically a passing grade although some language departments may require that a student with a low D repeat the course rather than go on to a next course in sequence and risk a failing grade. At present, juniors and seniors in the College are permitted to elect one course per semester on pass-fail basis in fields outside their specialization. If this system is extended to freshmen and sophomores taking required courses, some would undoubtedly benefit from it. The cut-off point of the pass-fail grading system corresponds to the lowest C range. It will be attractive to students who prefer not to have a C on their transcripts or who do not want to make an extra effort to receive a B or an A.

Pass-fail grades may be issued in two different ways. The instructor could describe each student's achievement in terms of his shortcomings and strong points. Or he might issue the traditional letter grades and let the Records Office convert them to pass or fail grades. The former attempts to pinpoint the student's specific accomplishments in a course. The latter, although based on the same theoretical principle, has the advantage of economy and simplicity. The instructor could always supply a detailed description of a student's performance and competence when he is so requested.

Not surprisingly, 72.0% of the replies were in favor of a pass-fail option for students fulfilling their language requirement. It is of interest to note that almost 80% of the junior staff members were in favor of this policy, while the opinions of the senior staff members were quite divided. The Classics Department stated also: "the younger members of the teaching staff supported such an innovation rather more than the older." The majority (78.6%) of those favoring the option would also prefer that the Records Office convert the letter grades to pass and fail grades. Eight of the 103 replies favoring the option did not choose either descriptive paragraphs or conversion of letters grades by the Records Office, although no other suggestions were supplied by them. Approximately 52.4% of those in favor of the option would also permit the student to shift from one

grading system to the other after classes begin. The Classics Department stated: "We do not support permitting the student to change his mind (after the beginning of classes)".

2) "In the present system, D is technically a passing grade (though some departments require that the student repeat the course). The cut-off point of a pass-fail system would presumably correspond to the lowest C range. If this is the case, would you be in favor of students having the option to elect a lower-level FL course on either pass-fail or traditional A-E grading system?"

103 yes
40 no

b) "If YES, would you be in favor of allowing the student to change his status from pass-fail to letter grades or vice versa after classes begin?"

54 yes
49 no

c) "Would you be in favor of the Records Office converting the letter grades to pass-fail while the instructor keeps records in terms of letter grades and numerical scores? (The instructor needs not know which students have elected the course on pass-fail)

81 yes
22 no

d) "If NO, will you be in favor of writing a short paragraph describing the student's (who opted for this system) strong and weak points?"

14 yes
8 no

C. Placement Test and Entrance Requirement

At present the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts strongly recommends that the prospective student study two years of a foreign language in high school. It does not require such a study nor does it recommend when in high school such a study should be undertaken. Entering freshmen are encouraged to take the CEEB test in the last year of high school language study, or during the summer orientation at the University. With a few exceptions, they are not

permitted to take the test once they are placed in a course. Adjustments in placement are usually carried out by course supervisors in consultation with the language instructor, the counselor, and the student in question.

This section of the survey attempted to measure staff attitudes toward the establishment of a definite entrance requirement, the possibility of granting college credit for the college language courses students are able to bypass thanks to their high school preparation, and the manner in which the placement test could be used. It was not surprising that nearly 77% of the replies were in favor of an entrance requirement. Of these, 80.9% were for the immediate establishment of a two-year entrance requirement and 82.7% favored a possible increase to three years at a later date.

Some of the replies objecting to any kind of admission requirement stated specific reasons. The most prevalent one was that at this point it is impractical to have a requirement because some high schools do not offer any languages and, consequently, it would be unfair to refuse admission to students whose lack of preparation is not his fault. Though none stated it, this might be the case for some students from rural areas or perhaps from "culturally-disadvantage" schools. Equally prominent and somewhat disturbing was the opinion that the high school language teachers are not competent to impart a working knowledge of any language to their students. With the advent of the NDEA institutes, state-wide workshops and in-service training programs, and advances in methodology, instructional materials, etc., foreign language teaching has been improving steadily. Furthermore, the number of students entering the University with three or more years of foreign languages has been increasing rapidly. An outright condemnation of high school language teachers as being incompetent and "singularly horrible" only reveals smugness, lack of understanding, prejudice, and ignorance of the development in secondary school language instruction on the part of some college instructors. In addition, four replies mentioned that an entrance requirement would penalize those students who decide in the last minute to attend the University. Two replies stated that high school curriculum is already crowded with too many college-preparatory courses without foreign languages. The letter from the Classics Department stated: "The question of establishing a language entrance requirement can only be answered on the basis of new information. How many Michigan schools now offer two years of a foreign language? Has the consolidation of school districts made (or will it make) a significant difference? Would such a requirement disrupt the balance of in-state and out-of-state students?"

Granting of college credit to entering students who are able to skip one or more lower-level courses drew unfavorable response from 62.2% of the 143 replies. The actual number of responses opposing this idea would have been higher had the members of the Classics Department participated in the survey. The letter from the chairman stated: "As to the question of granting credit hours for courses skipped, we believe the idea to be pernicious." It is also interesting to note that three of eight proposals submitted to the College faculty favored granting credit for high school language work. At any rate of the 54 replies which supported the idea, 48.1% were in favor of issuing the full four-hour credit for each course skipped by the student.

Nearly 89.5% of the replies approved the idea of permitting students to take the placement test to see if they can place out or bypass any courses leading to the fourth-semester. The foreign language requirement effective since 1954 specifies a performance comparable to that attained at the end of a fourth-semester course but does not restrict the manner in which students can reach such a proficiency level. Obviously, if a student chooses to achieve it through self study, travel or informal study abroad, etc., then he may want to take the placement test more than once. It should be noted, however, that almost 70% of the responses in favor of "liberalizing" the placement test administration also supported the idea that there should be a maximum number of times a student can take the test. Some of the replies stated specific reasons for this: Students may learn too much about the test after taking it repeatedly; courses may become too proficiency test-oriented; the problem of ordering enough copies for each examination from the ETS and then administering it frequently to students must be taken into consideration.

As to the frequency of administering the placement test, the questionnaire did not reveal any one prevailing opinion. The replies were divided in the following manner: any time during the semester (27.3%); at the beginning of the semester (26.5%); at the end of the semester (17.1%), at the beginning and the end of the semester (16.4%); and others (12.7%).

a) "Currently the College recommends that the prospective student study two years of FL in high school. Do you think that the College or the University should require a minimum FL study? (i.e., are you in favor of establishing an entrance requirement?)"

110 yes
33 no

b) "If YES, how many years of one language?"

4 one year now;	3 two years later
89 two years now;	91 two or three years later
17 three or more years now;	16 three or four years later

c) "If NO, could you state your reasons? (Use the reverse side of this questionnaire)"

12 answered this question

d) "In the current practice, students do not receive credit for the courses they can skip because of their high school study and the placement test result. Do you think they should receive credit, at least on pass basis, for every course skipped?"

54 yes
89 no

e) "If YES, how many credit hours for every course skipped? (Four hours would mean that the student receives full credit for each course, since all lower-level sequences are basically 4-hour courses)"

17 two hours
7 two or three hours
4 three hours
26 four hours

f) "Should all students enrolled in lower-level courses be permitted to take the placement test when they wish to see if they may place out of the requirement or any course leading to it?

128 yes
15 no

g) "If YES, should there be a maximum number of times they can take the test?"

89 yes
35 no
4 (N.A.--indicating uncertainty?)

h) "When should they be able to take the test?"

35 any time during the semester

34 at the beginning of the semester
22 at the end of the semester
37 others (please specify)

21 beginning and end
3 beginning, mid-term, and end
3 once a month
3 mid-semester
2 mid-semester and end
1 in July
4 at specific times designated by the dept.

D. Foreign Language Requirement

The foreign language requirement which went into effect in 1954 was prepared by a special committee and approved by the Faculty in 1951 (see the Appendix). Of the 143 replies 64.3% indicated familiarity with the principles enunciated in it. Two replies disagreeing to them stated that the foreign language study could be considered part of "liberal education".

Several, rather "loaded" and ambiguously worded questions were asked in regard to the language requirement. Approximately 81% believed that the study of a foreign language is culturally and intellectually important for every student--a response expected since it was elicited from those whose vocation is in Languages. Nearly two-third (67.8%) of the replies also indicated that they were in favor of a language requirement in the College. Of these, however, only 49.4% felt that the current practice in the languages they teach answered the goals of language study, while 47.4% did not think so, and the remaining 3.2% did not respond. The particular question was indeed poorly worded and did not ask the staff members to state reasons for agreeing or disagreeing to the statement. It is also interesting to note that 4 replies opposing any language requirement thought the current practice in teaching answered the goals of language study while an equal number felt otherwise, revealing the controversial nature of the question and the divided reaction to it.

The last item sought to measure the preference of language instructors for the various manners of modifying the existing language requirement. Seventeen (11.8%) advocated an outright abolition while the remainder supported the retention of some kind of requirement. The question did not stipulate that each person choose one solution and reject all the others. Some instructors selected up to four possibilities, indicating their preferences. Since a breakdown into percentage would be misleading, the following comments will mention only the number of "votes" received by each solution.

The one most favored (48 votes) was a slight modification of the existing requirement, which states that the fourth-semester proficiency may be reached through four semesters of college work or in any other way.

The next popular system (42 votes) was for options in lieu of language courses. The subjects suggested for substitution can be grouped into three distinct categories, reflecting different aspects of language study:

1. Language as a cultural skill subject: applied music, ceramics, painting, sculpture, etc.

2. Language as a mental or linguistic discipline: mathematics, symbolic logic, Old English, courses in communication science, etc.

3. Language as a cultural study: area study, Great Books, readings in translation, the literature, art, history, philosophy, etc. of a country.

Another solution (30 votes) was to require only the fourth-semester course in residence, the entrance to which might be determined by preceding college course work or by placement. This plan somewhat resembles the current practice of the Residential College (though the requirement there is a fourth-semester proficiency and a fifth-semester of course work).

A fourth solution (12 votes) was to institute a one-year requirement in the language begun in high school, or two years of a language begun in college. This would most likely result in a double standard, since the majority of students with two years of a foreign language are usually placed in the equivalent of a second-semester course.

Another solution (5 votes) called for a one-year language requirement beginning with the course in which the student is placed and not beyond the fourth semester. This resembles the policy recently adopted at Harvard University. The obvious disadvantage of this system is that it does not guarantee or offer equal amount of education (proficiency included) to all students and may even encourage some students to do poorly on the initial placement test.

There were three other possibilities suggested by 5 instructors, enumerated and commented upon in the following:

1. One-year requirement (3 votes)

Two things must be noted with this solution, which is also contained in two of the proposals submitted to the Faculty: First of all, one year of foreign language study does not result in any working proficiency. It merely offers a taste of language to students and involves them in the acquisition of basic language skills rather than in an active use of these skills in order to learn about the culture and civilization represented by the language. Such a "contact" requirement lacks sufficient opportunities for reinforcement, active use of the language for the ultimate goals of language study, and makes very little sense in terms of methodological and curricular considerations.

2. Third-semester requirement (1 vote)

This solution was proposed to the Faculty in its April meeting. There is a significant improvement in performance between semester I and II, and between semester II and III. The general proficiency does improve beyond the third semester, but not appreciably since much of language skills are used to explore the cultural aspects. The reading materials used in the first-year courses are almost inevitably based on "contrived" language, while those in the second-year sequence are glossed but authentic literary works and journalistic prose.

Furthermore, the cut-off points for the third-semester placement scores are quite respectable in terms of nation-wide achievement.[5] The study of French placement test results reveals that the majority of students with high school French would have only one or two semesters of work to do in order to fulfill a third-semester requirement. The fourth-semester course could be utilized then as a humanities course. In addition, students extremely deficient in audio-lingual work would be advised to follow the sequence 111-113, reading translation courses offered by some language departments for the Graduate School language requirement.

3. Lower the cut-off points (1 vote)

This opinion was also voiced by several members of the Faculty at its meetings. They pointed out that the cut-off scores at Harvard are lower than at Michigan and, indeed, much lower at other institutions. Cut-off scores for different levels are determined by giving the test to all students enrolled at these levels and analyzing the median performance. Obviously, such scores vary from one college to another, depending on the type of instruction offered and the type of students enrolled. The results of the CEEB Test, given twice in the past several years to students in French, were found to be quite similar. To lower the cut-off points would mean to lower artificially the standard of achievement by students in all elementary language courses.

a) "Are you familiar with the rationale of the current FL graduation requirement, prepared for the faculty by a special committee in 1951 (have you seen it)?"

92 yes
51 no

b) "If YES, are you in agreement with it?"

68 yes
17 no
7 (N.A.)

c) "If NO, could you enumerate your reasons on the reverse side?

two answered the question

d) "do you think that the study of a FL is culturally and intellectually important for every student?"

116 yes
19 no
9 (N. A.)

e) "Do you think that a language study should be required for every student in the College?"

97 yes
40 no
6 (N.A.)

f) "If YES, do you think that the current practice in the language you teach answers the goals of language study?"

48 yes
46 no
3 (N.A.)

g) "If you are in favor of changing the current FL requirement, please state your preference:"

17 "(1) The requirement should be abolished."

42 "(2) Option given to students to substitute other courses such as linguistics, history, great books, readings in translation, etc. (What courses would you accept as substitutions?)"

30 "(3) A fourth-semester course to be taken in residence, the entrance to which is determined by:

10 appropriate course work leading to it (9 with or 1 without pass-fail option);

4 proficiency test only (no credit for courses leading to it);

16 course work and/or proficiency test;

0 others (please specify)."

48 "(4) A fourth-semester proficiency only, to be demonstrated by the results on a proficiency test. Students may reach that point by course work in HS and/or college, self-study, travel abroad, etc. If college courses are taken, they should be:

32 with credit and pass-fail option;

7 without any credit;

9 (N.A.)"

5 "(5) A one-year requirement beginning with the course in which the student is placed, and:

0 beyond the 4th semester;
2 not beyond the 4th semester;
3 (N.A.)"

12 "(6) 5 above in the language begun in high school, or two years (or a 4th-semester proficiency) in a new language"

5 "(7) Others (please specify)"

E. Multiple-Track Language Program

Some universities offer a multiple-track language program, usually including the so-called "reading track" for students who are not proficient in oral-aural skills or who prefer to acquire only the reading knowledge of a language. The Department of Romance Languages has considered from time to time the possibility of adopting such a program. In December, 1968, plans were made and a three-track program in the second-year French courses were offered on an experimental basis in the Winter semester. The last section of the questionnaire was intended to survey the language instructor's opinions regarding the feasibility of a multiple-track program.

About 50.3% of the replies did not think that the four fundamental language skills (listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing) should be taught with equal emphasis in all the lower-level courses, while 41.2% felt that they should be. The question which elicted these responses was poorly worded and may not reflect the true attitudes of the staff members. In most languages, the four skills are not always equally stressed in all the courses. The first-year courses are often audio-lingually oriented with a gradual introduction of reading and writing. On the other hand, the second-year courses often emphasize reading and, to an extent, writing, while maintaining the previously acquired audio-lingual skills. At any rate, 54.5% of the replies did not indicate that the four skills could be adequately taught in four trimesters[6], while 30% seemed to feel that this was possible. The question was probably open to various interpretations due to the use of words such as "adequately taught".

An overwhelming majority of instructors (87.4 %) thought that some students were interested in acquiring reading skills rather than the audio-lingual skills, or vice versa: 71.3% of the instructors also felt that a sequence of courses in which one or two language skills are stressed and the others de-emphasized (but not excluded) would result in an increased proficiency in those skills that are emphasized. A fairly high number of replies choosing the answer "don't know" might indicate the hypothetical nature of the question.

The last item dealt with the various possibilities for a multiple-track language program. The instructors were asked to indicate what type of tracks with what kind of emphasis (again not a <u>total</u> exclusion of other skills) could be created. Nearly one-half of the instructors responded to this question and offered various suggestions. Of these, 5 were totally incomprehensible to the writer, reducing the total number to 69 replies, grouped into 14 distinctly different systems. Of these 52.1% favored some kind of three-track program. The plans receiving three or more "votes" are reproduced below. The four language skills are represented by the letters LSRW. Most favored 4 credit hours for LSRW and LS, and 3 hours for a reading track (RW, R, or LSR). Three responses supported intensive courses of different types with 8-10 credit hours each. Since the number of credit hours varied considerably from one suggestion to another, it is not included in the following chart. Again, the readers are reminded that the absence of certain skills in any track does <u>not</u> mean that they are completely excluded from the program. It is a question of <u>relative</u> emphasis and only the skills to be emphasized in the course are shown:

	semesters I	II	III	IV
1. Three-track program				
A) 26 votes	LSRW--	LSRW---	LSRW----	LSRW
			LS-------	LS
			RW------	RW
B) 6 votes	LSRW---	LSRW---	LSRW----	LSRW
	LS------	LS------	LS-------	LS
	RW-----	RW-----	RW------	RW
C) 4 votes	LSRW---	LSRW---	LSRW----	LSRW
			LSW-----	LSW
			LRW-----	LRW
2. Two-track program				
A) 6 votes	LSRW---	LSRW---	LSRW----	LSRW
	RW-----	RW-----	RW------	RW
B) 9 votes	LS------	LS------	LS-------	LS
	RW-----	RW-----	RW------	RW
C) 3 votes	LSRW---	LSRW---	LS------	LS
			RW	RW
3. One-track program				
A) 5 votes	LSRW	LSRW	LSRW	LSRW
B) 3 votes	LS	LS	LSRW	LSRW

"MULTIPLE-TRACK SYSTEM (Referring specifically to the language you teach; if you are referring to other languages or to languages in general, please state so)"

a) "Do you think that the four fundamental skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) should be taught more or less equally in all the lower-level courses?"

59 yes
72 no
12 don't know
3 (N.A.)

b) "Do you think some students are more interested in learning how to read rather than to speak, or vice versa?"

125 yes
8 no
7 don't know
3 (N.A.)

c) "Is it possible to teach the four skills adequately in four trimesters?"

43 yes
78 no
22 don't know

d) "If we created a few tracks, each track emphasizing one or two skills and de-emphasizing (but NOT excluding) the others, could more proficiency in these skills be gained?"

102 yes
12 no
29 don't know

e) "If you are in favor of creating multiple tracks, which skills should each track emphasize? (Please note that other skills cannot be totally neglected in any case). Where should such divisions occur? Please cross out the skills to be de-emphasized in each track, and write in the parentheses the number of regular class meetings per week the track should have.

	Semester I	Semester II	Semester III	Semester IV
Track 1	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )
Track 2	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )
Track 3	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )
Track 4	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )
Track 5	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )	LSRW ( )

" Please give any comments concerning the multiple-track system on the reverse side of this sheet."

III: CONCLUSION

The prevailing opinion of those who responded to the survey, most of whom are in modern European languages, may be summed up in the following way: Language study is an important part of the educational policy as established by the Literary College. The College should institute an entrance requirement of two years and increase it to three years eventually. Students fulfilling the language requirement should have the option of electing the courses on pass-fail or

traditional letter grade system. They should be able to take the placement test a limited number of times in order to see if they may be placed out of requirement or of any course or courses leading to it. The foreign language requirement implemented since 1954 should be modified and its administrative policy should be liberalized. Some kind of multiple-track language program should be instituted so that students have the choice of language skills in which they wish to gain most proficiency. A preliminary analysis of this survey along with data pertinent to placement test results and course administration, was sent to the Curriculum Committee.

The revised majority report of the College Curriculum Committee, which was subsequently accepted by the Faculty over several other proposals, embodies nearly all of the opinions in regard to the amelioration of the foreign language requirement revealed in our survey. Details need to be worked out through appropriate channels such as the College Administrative Board, Curriculum Committee, and Admissions Committee, in cooperation with language departments.. It is felt that the revised requirement is a reasonable compromise and will ease the pressure off some students, even though it fails to answer the demand of those who seek a total student control of the academic program.

During the year-long debate on foreign language requirement, many language teachers asked soul-searching questions concerning the philosophy of education, objectives of foreign language teaching, instructional methods, etc. Several questions still remain unanswered: Has every instructor done the best of his ability in teaching? Is the type of mental or intellectual discipline involved in language learning contrary to most students' study habits? Can motivation be created and strengthened in language classes? Is it possible for effective learning to take place without the danger of the classroom becoming a kind of entertainment center often found in language classes of adult education programs? Can the instructional materials be made more "relevant" to student problems, aspirations, and needs? Each of these questions require not only yes or no but why and how. Needless to say, there is much work to be done in the field of psycholinguistics, methodology, and other fields related to language teaching.

The language program at the University of Michigan has not been static. Changes and improvements are made constantly in the hope of strengthening the instruction, training better college instructors, and keeping up to date with the latest developments in the profession. Much more work remains to be done. There should be better articulation of high school and college language programs. Language departments should play a more active role in the training of high

school as well as college instructors. The enrollment in language classes should be reduced to a reasonable number per section. Heavy reliance on teaching fellowships as a means of financial support and recruitment of graduate students should be eased by the allocation of more non-teaching fellowships and scholarships. The existing physical facilities and especially the language laboratory of the University should be greatly improved without waiting for the proposed Language Building. Finally, the foreign language program should continue to evaluate itself and the voices of all the enlightened, responsible, and experienced persons--be it students, instructors, or coordinators--should be heard in language curriculum improvements. Only then can we truly claim that language learning constitutes a vital part of liberal education.

M. P. Hagiwara

Footnotes

1. For a detailed description of the Elementary French courses, see No. 38 (May, 1967) of the Foreign Language Courier. A similar description of German courses appears in No. 39 (January, 1968) of the Courier.

2. The percentage of D's and E's issued in the Elementary French courses has declined steadily in the past few years. The ratio of these low grades (D and E) issued in 101 was 17%, 102. 15%, 103, 12.5%, 231, 11%, and 232, 13.5%. The median performance of 101-231 corresponded to a C+ and that of 232, to a B-.

3. For a detailed study of the results of the placement tests in French, see No. 32 (April, 1964) and No. 39 (January, 1968) of the Foreign Language Courier. A similar study for students in German appeared in No. 39 and No. 40 (May, 1968) of the Courier.

4. In a sense the College does have a de facto requirement in that less than 5% of the freshmen in the fall of 1968 had had less than two years of a foreign language.

5. For the cut-off points on the CEEB Test in modern European languages and the basic placement policy, see No. 37 (December, 1966) of the Foreign Language Courier. The description of the student having achieved the proficiency equivalent to the fourth-semester course is found in the last paragraph of the Requirement Rationale (see Appendix).

6. Each trimester consists of fourteen weeks of classes. Most of the elementary courses in modern European languages meet four times a week.

APPENDIX I- ORIGINAL F. L. REQUIREMENT

FROM THE PROPOSED MINUTES OF SPECIAL FACULTY MEETING May 14, 1951 COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND THE ARTS

In pursuance to call (pp. 1691-93), a special meeting of the faculty of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts was held in Room 1025 Angell Hall on Monday, May 14, 1951, beginning at 4:15 P.M. Dean Hayward Keniston presided. An approximate count indicated about 145 members present. The order of business was consideration of the report of the Standing Committee on Curriculum with regard to the requirement in foreign language.

Associate Professor Benjamin W. Wheeler moved and Professor Karl Kitzenberg seconded the following resolution:

RESOLVED that all candidates for a bachelor's degree from this College shall complete a fourth semester course in a foreign language, or display equivalent proficiency in an achievement test to be administered by the department concerned.

No student may automatically satisfy this requirement or any part of it by presenting entrance units in a foreign language. Students electing to qualify in a language studied before entering college shall take a placement test to be administered by the department concerned, and shall continue, with credit, at the level indicated; except that students who score at the fourth semester proficiency level on this test shall be deemed to have satisfied the requirement.

(Passed, but action deferred. Effective in 1956)

Professor A. H. Marchwardt read the following from the report of the sub-committee:

"In the discussions leading to the adoption of the new curriculum, the educational justification of the various disciplines which came to comprise the distribution requirements was regarded as self-evident. Consequently no detailed rationale of the place of beginning English or of a course in laboratory science was presented to the Faculty during its deliberations. It might be similarly assumed that any defense of foreign-language study as an integral part of a liberal education would be a work of supererogation. However, in the light of the peculiar situation which led to our deferring the implementation of this requirement (though adopted), it seems desirable for this committee to begin its report with a statement of the place of foreign-language study in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

We believe that such a rationale should be based primarily upon the function of foreign-language study in the particular curriculum of this College. Therefore, the proper starting place is with those features of the curriculum which are fundamental in its construction.

The new Michigan curriculum, like many others which emerged from the post-war tendency toward revision, is based on the conviction that the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts must provide its graduates with a liberal education. A liberal education will necessarily include those studies which prepare the student to live a good and full life as an individual and as a member of the community. The college also assumes that in order to secure a "good" and "full" life, all of its graduates must have shared a common experience and training in a number of the fundamental intellectual disciplines.

As a means of realizing these aims, the curriculum recognizes five major areas of intellectual endeavor: communication in the native language; the natural sciences, with their accompaniment of laboratory techniques; the social sciences, with their emphasis upon institutions and cultures; mathematics or philosophy, serving as an introduction to abstract thinking, and the humanities, concerned with the expression, in various media and systems of communications, of the ideas, the highest ideals, and the aspirations of man. Each student must, before graduation, work in every one of these fields,

thus giving the individual a direct contact with the content, method, and system of values of the various disciplines by which men try to understand themselves and the world in which they live, and assuring to our society, a cohesion accruing from common and basic experiences.

This ultimate aim of "understanding the world in which they live," if we accept it with any degree of sincerity, can scarcely be obtained through the confining medium of a single language. There is little question that the problem facing the present and the next generation is chiefly one of adjustment. We must adapt our patterns of behavior, and the faith and postulates upon which they are based, to the changing world resulting from the conquest, by modern science, of time, space, and inertia. That a cultural adjustment must necessarily accompany, if not precede, wider cooperation in the practical and political spheres is indicated by the emphasis which the United Nations has placed upon the activities of UNESCO, its cultural adjunct.

From the point of view of the individual, the confinement of the monolingual to a single speech island in the synthesis of experience may well constitute the greatest barrier to this vital adjustment. Unquestionably, America's position among nations places upon the individual citizen the responsibility of transcending local, regional, or even national points of view and approaching something like a world perspective. No longer can we innocently assume that all civilizations are patterned precisely like our own. We cannot, therefore, afford the easy luxury of a parochial and monolingual culture. Nor must we conceive of the broadening relationships among nations only as horizontal in space. They are vertical in time as well, which means that the synthesis of human experience afforded by a knowledge of the ancient languages cannot be permitted to become the exclusive property of a dwindling rear guard of specialists.

Foreign languages are tools, it is true, and could easily be justified for many students on the basis of professional preparation. This tool value, incidentally, could be more fully realized if such languages were employed in connection with other studies earlier and more frequently than they have been in more recent years. But the world situation has become so compelling that to stress these purely personal and individual considerations would be mute evidence of a lack of that very breadth of view to which we have commited our College and its course of study.

In keeping with this concept of the place of language study in the Michigan curriculum, it is the experience of learning a foreign language, the experience of breaking the barriers of a single speech and

a single culture, that is of primary importance. It follows, therefore, that an evaluation of our foreign-language training in terms of the curriculum should be based upon this learning experience.

The Faculty has included among the distribution requirements of the new curriculum certain prescribed work in a laboratory science. We do not, as a result of this requirement, expect each of our graduating seniors to qualify as a trained laboratory technician. Instead, we regard the experience with inductive and experimental procedure as valuable in itself. The mathematics-philosophy requirement is again justified in terms of an experience in abstract thinking rather than absolute attainment. Consequently, it is entirely in keeping with our philosophy of liberal education as expressed in the new curriculum to consider the foreign-language requirement in precisely the same light as these others.

The question then becomes one of the extent of such a learning experience which may be considered minimally desirable and productive. There can be little doubt that the first year of study of a foreign language serves as the barest introduction to the basic elements of that language. At the close of the second semester there is but little automatic grasp of the inflectional pattern of the language, nor has there been an acquisition of vocabulary sufficient to assure any considerable amount of automatic recall or response to literary or life situations. The student, at this stage, has not in any sense acquired to manipulate a second medium of expression. Without this, the presentation of related materials about the life and culture of the people whose language he is studying would have little more than superficial significance.

It is fair to say that the second year of foreign language study goes much farther in providing the student with a vital learning experience. We may reasonably expect him to emerge from a fourth semester of a foreign language with some oral facility, with the ability to read narrative journalistic prose, expository writing in which the ideas expressed are reasonably complex, literary materials either edited for student use or those which in themselves are not too difficult. He will have acquired the foundation for future progress in that language and will have come into contact with the ways of life, the mentality, and the aspirations of at least one civilization other than his own. He has had the experience of transcending the naive limitations of a single language and the attendant satisfaction of being able to manipulate a medium other than his native tongue. Only through this means can we assure ourselves of the intellectual flexibility and sophistication to which we, as a Faculty, have commited ourselves by the inclusion of any language study whatsoever as a requirement in the new curriculum."

APPENDIX II: REVISED F. L. REQUIREMENT

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Revised Majority Report On the Foreign Language Requirement

As the philosophical basis and justification of the current Foreign Language requirement we subscribe to the view that the learning of a second language constitutes a primary intellectual experience: the experience of seeing the world with a new set of relationships in which reality is ordered in a manner different from one's own language. Viewed from this perspective the Foreign Language requirement stands as a peer next to the requirements in the natural and social sciences and humanities. The justification of Foreign Language study for the sake of cultural insight, for its vocational, anti-parochial, touristic and tool value is thereby not negated but merely placed in perspective.

The pragmatic objective of Foreign Language instruction is the attainment of a modest degree of bi-lingualism guided by a realistic and informed appraisal of the paths leading to such an achievement. In order to make this learning process more flexible and equitable, we recommend the following administrative and instructional modifications of the existing Foreign Language Requirements for the B.A. degree.

I. Four of the modifications are of an innovative nature.

1. That entering students who have completed four years of a foreign language in High School with passing grades be considered to have satisfied the language requirements.

2. That "alternative" tracks such as a reading-track be established to supplement the present method of teaching languages.

3. That a student may opt to elect language 101, 102, 231, or 232 under the "pass-fail" option subject to all other conditions normally applicable to pass-fail elections, including the provision that "A", "B", and "C" constitute a "pass", and "D" and "E" a "Fail".

4. That in cases where the language requirement has already been satisfied, a student who completes 232 in a second language may, wherever feasible, count that course toward satisfaction of the humanities distribution requirement.

II. The following administrative practices are in force at present but need to be codified and publicized.

1. That entering students continuing the study of a language begun elsewhere be placed in a language course as indicated by a placement test. Such students shall receive credit for the course so indicated or for a course below the level indicated by the placement test if lower placement is requested by a student and approved by the representative of the language department concerned.

2. That students be permitted and encouraged to satisfy the language requirement by achieving a score on a reading or reading-listening examination equivalent to a two-year college proficiency as determined by consultation between the Curriculum Committee and the various language departments. A student may take this examination more than once.

3. That a student who receives a "D" in language courses 101, 102, or 231 may, if he wishes, repeat the course without credit but shall not be compelled to repeat. He may either proceed to the next course at his own risk or repeat the course under the normal provision that both grades shall be recorded and figured into his cumulative grade-point-average.

George R. Anderson, ex-officio
W. H. Locke Anderson, Economics
Frank X. Braun, German
Dean C. Baker, ex-officio
Jean R. Carduner, Romance Languages
Carl Cohen, ex-officio
Otto Graf, ex-officio
Lois Loewenthal, Zoology
James W. Shaw, ex-officio
Erich Steiner, Botany
Alfred Sussman, ex-officio

APPENDIX III: STATEMENTS BY FOUR LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN

Some Propositions Concerning Requirements - Language & Other

1. The effort to re-examine the educational offerings of the College is always appropriate, with or without the spur of student agitation.

2. The academic community is not, and never has been, a "one-man-one-vote" egalitarian society. Education is not a democratic process, but a sharing of skills, information, methods, and even wisdom by those who possess them with others who do not possess them, or do so to a lesser degree. No apology for this state of affairs is needed.

3. Under the general authority reserved to the Regents, the faculty has not only the right but the responsibility to design the curriculum it thinks proper, to require any component of it of any or all students, and thus to describe the degree which it awards.

4. Student opinion, reaction and advice - difficult as it is to obtain in any representative way - should always be sought and heeded. Decision-making on educational goals, ways and means is the business of the faculty.

5. Student power, in this context, is the power to bring informed student opinion and, if necessary, responsible student action, to bear on the discussions which precede and inform decision.

6. To assert the above propositions, and to run the College by them is not to coerce anyone nor to violate the personal, academic, social, political or human rights of anyone, student or faculty. To maintain otherwise is naive.

7. Those who reject this general ordering of the academic enterprise are not constrained to remain in it. Their efforts to change it, without disruption of it or violation of law, are perfectly legitimate.

8. This faculty has chosen to make certain curricular requirements binding on all who expect to receive the B.A. degree. It can change them when it sees fit. Meantime, the departments and other units implement them for the College.

9. All the requirements are included for the same reason: they are educational experiences which are deemed valuable per se for all students.

10. This value is not measured primarily by any usefulness (nor in deed by any use) of the subject-matter after the defined required exposure, or accomplishment.

11. If a requirement is abolished or substantially changed, it should be because the condition described in 9) above has changed.

12. The "package" of requirements is not a random accumulation of useful or desirable studies, but a description of the minimal components of a Bachelor of Arts degree.

13. Substitutions for required elements of curriculum should offer the same kind of educational experience as the required unit.

14. The current requirements of LSA reflect the faculty's intent, to assure the student's contact with each of five intellectual disciplines: English, foreign language, natural science, social science, the humanities.

15. It was assumed, 15 years ago, that a cultural adjustment to a rapidly-changing world was imperative for educated men, that Americans could no longer afford the luxury of a parochial or monolingual culture, and that the knowledge of foreign languages was the most direct instrument for advancing cultural adjustment and world-wide understanding.

16. The study of a language other than English offers, first, the experience of breaking the barrier of a single speech; of grasping, if only imperfectly, the sense of what it means and how it feels to organize one's whole world, from cradle to crave, in a set of symbols which are meaningless to one who knows only English. This experience, which heightens as mastery is approached, is nonetheless valid at levels far short of mastery, and in the study of ancient as well as of modern languages.

17. It is desirable, even necessary, that the maximum number of Americans in these last years of the XXth century, have the maximum possible access to the symbols in which the rest of the world expresses itself - that is, to foreign language.

18. This has consequences for the educational system, and lays an obligation upon it. The habit of linguistic and cultural isolationism, self-satisfaction and false pride which characterizes the American attitude generally has always had to be countered with strong measures. The production of a linguistically sophisticated elite at the end of the educational process probably depends on the exposure of large masses

of students to language study somewhere during their educational program. The requirement of such study, either for entrance or for exit, or both, by the collegiate institutions of the country is the king-pin of the whole structure. This may be the only country where this is so, but it is certainly so here.

19. Foreign language study has therefore been required, and is still required, either before or during college, or both, by every degree program for the A.B. in the U.S.A. (as of 1967, at least), except five.

20. This College requires that students demonstrate a proficiency in some foreign language equivalent to that achieved at the end of the fourth-semester college course. This means the student has acquired: ". . . some oral facility, the ability to read narrative journalistic prose or expository writing in which the ideas are reasonably complex, and literary materials either edited for student use or not in themselves too difficult. . . the foundation for future progress in that language, and direct contact with the ways of life, the mentality and the aspirations of at least one civilization other than his own." This objective is in fact attained by students who do satisfactory or superior work in the courses in the College right now, and no apology for their accomplishment is in order. Those who fail should be listened to with the same sympathy as those who fail in any other required course.

21. The desirability and necessity of the maximum possible acquisition of these skills are surely no less than they were fifteen years ago. The reasons for requiring foreign language study are, if anything more compelling now than then.

22. Modifications in this and other requirements, changes in their implementation, or in the options to be granted by the faculty or the Administrative Board can be effected in the usual order of faculty business, and should be so handled. The Curriculum Committee will soon come forth with the results and recommendations deriving from months of careful study of these matters.

23. However abolition of the foreign language requirement is currently urged by students and by members of the faculty, for various reasons, some of which are here listed:

Disagreement with the propositions stated above as numbers 2 through 7

Foreign languages would be sufficiently studied, and sufficient expertise achieved by a sufficient number of people under

a system of free election. (An opinion: no evidence to date supports it. Experience indicates the contrary.)

FL study should be done before arrival at the University level (Agreed, yet we have no entrance requirement.)

FL proficiency is desirable, but should not be acquired in college at the expense of other possible electons. (Nobody requires that it be done in college)

The experience afforded by language study is not a necessary part of the training of a liberally educated person. (Perhaps not. But are English composition, laboratory science, social science, humanities? That is for us to decide and say, on the basis of our experience.)

Foreign language competence is not needed to assure for students the desired "cosmopolitan view of the world" nor the necessary access to what the non-English-speaking world says and thinks. For that, English is nowadays adequate, which is to say:

a) What is essential is accessible in translation.

b) i.e., this essential element is some kind of transferable content.

c) i.e., this content is separable, without significant loss, from the form in which it is expressed.

d) i.e., the form in which thought is expressed (most immediately and generally, the language) is fundamentally irrelevant and immaterial.

(Unfortunately, only those who know more than one language can know by experience how untrue the above is: monolinguals can only know it by faith, if at all.)

24. Immediately and locally, it is also argued that the foreign language requirement should be abolished because:

a) Language study is not an intellectually stimulating activity (true, at elementary training levels. But the accomplishment, at any useful level, is one of the most envied and admired ones in our society. And it cannot be acquired by injection.)

b) Languages are badly taught. (No more nor no less so than other subjects, given the conditions of instruction. They may be badly learned, because of the different nature of the learning, at least at first. Changes and improvements are constantly being sought after.)

c) Mastery cannot be achieved in the time assigned. (True, and nobody ever said it could. Outside the USA, serious study of language is seldom undertaken for so short a period, in classroom conditions.)

d) Too much is attempted at once. (Possibly. Easily changed, if so. Opinions on methodology are valued and acted on, when proffered by professionals)

e) Significant numbers of students "can't learn language". (No evidence known to support this.)

f) Language study is arduous and demanding of time and energy on a day-to-day basis. (True)

g) A disproportionate number of students fail their language courses. (Not true, at least presently).

h) It is somehow harmful to have to do things which one doesn't want to do. (No comment)

This statement was largely composed by Professor O'Neill after several conversations, and other signatories wish to associate themselves with it.

Theodore V. Buttrey
Chairman, Department
of Classical Studies

James C. O'Neill
Chairman, Department
of Romance Languages

Clarence K. Pott
Chairman, Department
of Germanic Languages

John Mersereau Jr.
Chairman, Department
of Slavic Languages

APPENDIX IV: A PROPOSAL FOR AN ENTRANCE REQUIREMENT

February 12, 1969

Professor John E. Milholland
Chairman
Committee on Admissions
K 104 W. Quad
Campus

Dear Professor Milholland:

Less than two years ago the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction recommended to your Committee that a foreign Language entrance requirement be instituted in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Although your report to the faculty dated December 4, 1967, stated "A majority of the Committee on Foreign Language Instruction has recommended that we institute a language requirement but it is not yet clear just what form it might take (p.5477), no follow-up study seems to have been undertaken.

Our Committee has discussed the problem of an entrance requirement in foreign languages and we urge you to consider the adoption of a two-year entrance requirement. The rationale for this proposal is essentially similar to the one stated in March, 1967 but it has been modified somewhat in order to take into consideration the current discussion on the foreign language graduation requirement.

We would like to ask you to consider the proposal enclosed herewith and study its feasibility. The individual members of our Committee will be glad to discuss any details with you and answer your questions.

Sincerely yours.
M. P. Hagiwara
Chairman
Committee on Foreign
Language Instruction

cc. members of the Curriculum Committee
members of the Foreign Language Instruction Committee

PROPOSAL FOR THE INSTITUTION OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENT

The committee on Foreign Language Instruction proposes that the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts institute a two-year entrance requirement in foreign languages with the proviso that it may be increased to three years in the future.

Many colleges and universities in various parts of the country already require or strongly recommend that their applicants study four years of a language in high school. The current College catalogue s states that all students who plan to enter the College as freshman are strongly advised to include at least two years of a foreign language, classical or modern, in their high school program, and that they must take a placement test (the College Entrance Examination Board test), if they decide to continue the study of a modern language begun in high school.

The College has a de facto entrance requirement in that no more than five per cent of the freshmen who entered the College this year seem to have had less than two years of foreign language study. Yet the enrollment in the first-year courses in modern languages has not decreased as rapidly as expected. It may be partly due to the fact that many students prefer to begin a new language upon arrival at the University. It may indicate an inferior performance in language study in high school. In many instances, however, the problem seems to arise from the fact that students who study two years of foreign language do so during their ninth and tenth grades. The unfortunate interruption of study in the eleventh and twelfth grades often results in low achievement on the placement test and at times in low performance in the college course where students are placed.

The College should inform the high school counsellors that if only two units of a foreign language are available in a high school, the college-bound students should be encouraged to take these two units in the eleventh and twelfth grades, or possibly audit the second-year level course taken earlier.

Some members of our profession tend to regard high school language instructors as incompetent. It should be remembered, however, that it is the university which trains and produces high school teachers. Furthermore, it should be noted that the quality of language instruction in secondary schools has increased gradually, thanks to improved teacher training in colleges, the NDEA institutes, state workshops, in-service training programs, and better instructional materials. The adoption of an entrance requirement by the College will

indicate the recognition of the importance of foreign language study in high schools and will give impetus to better organized and articulated programs in high schools

Students entering the College may continue the study of the foreign language begun in high school, or elect another language if they so prefer. It has been known that a study of one language results in positive transfer of skills in the learning of another language. In addition, members of departments teaching the so-called exotic or neglected languages prefer that their students have been already exposed to another language.

Where minimum placement policy exists, as in French, Spanish, and German, not permitting students to elect the beginning course for credit, students with insufficient language background may either elect another language or audit the first-semester course if they insist on continuing the study of the same language begun in high school. Since the entrance requirement could not be instituted overnight, entering freshmen with less than two years of language study may be guided to another language in the meantime.

It should be pointed out that in the two years of high school language study, many students are unlikely to acquire proficiency in the basic language skills comparable to that attained at the end of a first-year college sequence. If, however, the two years of study are undertaken in in the eleventh and twelfth grades, more students might be placed in the third-semester rather than the second-semester course and thus shorten the amount of language study in the College.

We also point out that the Summary Report, 1965-66, prepared by the *Bureau of School Services states* that the number of high schools in Michigan offering three or more years of modern languages has increased significantly. We believe that the College should not require two years of language study but also strongly advise that those who plan to enter the College include three years of a foreign language when it is feasible. It is felt that such a requirement will have a salutary effect on high school foreign language program in Michigan and elsewhere, which has been strengthened considerably in recent years.

M. P. Hagiwara
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Language
Instruction

EDITOR'S NOTE

The editor of the Foreign Language Courier wishes to thank the staff members of the foreign Language departments of the University of Michigan and the subscribers of the Courier for their contribution of news items and articles. The Foreign Language Courier welcomes from all its readers news items, announcements, and short articles of general and specific interest to college and high school teachers of foreign languages. The following is a suggested list of topics for the next issue of the Courier which will be published next fall.

1. News items and announcements
   a. New courses or programs which are or will be offered in your department; brief description of the purpose, scope, requirements, etc.
   b. Enrollment analysis; increase or decrease in certain courses and possible reasons.
   c. NDEA and other institutes.
   d. Accelerated or honors programs--how they differ from regular courses; brief analysis or evaluation.
   e. Placement test policies.
   f. News items pertaining to teaching and learning in other schools or countries--if from a secondary source, indicate it, or enclose clippings.
   g. Workshops of any kind given for language teaching improvement.
2. Short articles
   a. Method of testing--how the four skills are tested in your department.
   b. Monitoring in the language laboratory--how it is done and how effective it is.
   c. Teacher training program or system of supervision of teaching assistants or new teachers in your department.
   d. Accreditation visits--purpose, method, results, etc.
   e. The use of audio-lingual aids in language courses.
   f. The critique of currently available standardized tests.
   g. The application of audio-lingual teaching methods to the teaching of reading and writing.

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